

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina Office of the Governor

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Contact: Emma Lipscomb
Phone: 919/733-5612

DONATED HOLIDAY DECORATIONS TO ADORN STATE CAPITOL

RALEIGH – An assortment of Christmas trees and holiday wreaths donated by the 2008 North Carolina Christmas Tree Association Grand Champions will be on display at the State Capitol this holiday season. Each year the association donates trees and wreaths to decorate the Capitol during this festive time.

“North Carolina Christmas trees and wreaths will adorn millions of people’s homes around the world as they celebrate this holiday season,” said Gov. Mike Easley. “I am proud of our state’s Christmas tree growers and commend them for their hard work in producing some of the finest trees and wreaths in the country.”

North Carolina leads the nation in the farm sales of Christmas trees, \$134 million, and is second in the number of trees harvested, more than five million annually. The North Carolina Fraser Fir is the most popular Christmas tree in North America and is shipped to every state as well as the Caribbean Islands, Mexico, Canada, Bermuda, Japan and other points around the world. The state is home to about 1,600 Christmas tree growers.

David and Barbara Banner, owners of Banner Brand Tree Farm in Avery County, were named the 2008 Grand Champion Fraser Fir Growers by the state Christmas Tree Association. A 12-foot tree they donated will be decorated by volunteers from the Junior Woman’s Club of Raleigh and placed in the state Capitol Rotunda. The tree will feature ornaments from all of the state’s 100 counties.

Joe Freeman and Linda Jones of Mistletoe Meadows in Ashe County were named the 2008 Grand Champion Wreath Makers by the state Christmas Tree Association. Their wreaths will adorn the doors of the State Capitol.

Both 2008 N.C. Christmas Tree Association Grand Champions will represent the state at the National Christmas Tree Association’s Tree and Wreath Contest in August 2009. The winner of the national contest will provide the official White House Christmas tree for 2009. Jessie Davis and Rusty Estes, owners of River Ridge Tree Farms in Ashe County, who presented the state Capitol Christmas trees to Easley in 2007, won the national contest last year and presented one of their trees to First Lady Laura Bush for the White House Blue Room on November 30.

The theme for this year’s decorations at the state Capitol is “North Carolina Home for the Holidays.” The Raleigh Garden Club will decorate the other trees and areas of the State Capitol. Using a variety of fresh

Governor's Press Office
State Capitol, Raleigh, NC 27603-8001
(919) 733-5612 - Toll Free 1-800-662-7005
FAX (919) 733-5166